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Ministry of Advanced Education

WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY CENTRE GETS $5M BOOST FROM PROVINCE

VANCOUVER – A $5-million grant to Wavefront, B.C.'s first wireless technology centre will provide the province's small and medium-sized wireless businesses with access to cutting-edge equipment to test their new software and hardware products and bring them to market, announced Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell today.

Wavefront will strengthen B.C.'s wireless industry by providing research facilities for businesses to test, demonstrate and evaluate new products. These products range from games, sport scores and news article software programs for cell phones to much more complex software and hardware products for major telecommunication providers.

"This is the first wireless facility in the province that will deliver this kind of comprehensive research and commercialization expertise to local businesses," said Coell. "Providing wireless companies with the opportunity to develop innovative products has the potential to bring substantial economic and social benefits to the province."

Wavefront is an initiative of the Wireless Innovation Network of BC. WINBC, its 100-plus member companies, and the broader wireless community will be able to use Wavefront's extensive technology, lab resources, equipment, showcases, industry forums, workshops, mentoring and other programs. WINBC brings the sector closer together by fostering collaboration among early-stage wireless companies in B.C.

"We are extremely pleased that the provincial government has supported Wavefront, an entity that will support B.C.'s world-class wireless community and other industries that rely on wireless technologies to drive their businesses forward," said Caroline Lewko, founding chair of Wavefront and CEO of the Wireless Industry Partnership. "This shows the government's foresight in identifying commercialization as a key part of innovation."

British Columbia's high-tech sector has outpaced the overall Canadian economy in gross domestic product growth for several years. The industry continues to make significant contributions to the B.C. economy increasing revenues, paying high wages and generating new companies with more than 70,000 people employed in B.C.'s technology sector today.

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Research and innovation will play a major role in shaping British Columbia's future social and economic development, and in enhancing the province's domestic and international competitiveness. The B.C. Research and Innovation Strategy sets out a strategic and co-ordinated approach to research and innovation in the province. Since 2001, the Province has invested $1.5 billion for research in B.C. and leveraged another $900 million in added funding from other sources.

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